ADDRESS

OF THE

CENTRAL REPUBLICAN CLUB

OF THE COUNTY OF ERIE.

To the Electors of this County:

At a meeting of the citizens of Buffalo opposed to the Democratic party, called for the purpose of organizing a Central Republican Club, the undersigned were appointed to prepare an address to you, arguing the propriety of the formation of auxiliary organizations in each town and ward.

Only two years have elapsed since a large majority of you determined to cast out of power, in this city and county the leaders of the Democracy, and that determination was made practical and effective in two successive elections.

Thus two thirds of the voters of this county, within two years most unequivocally manifested their opposition to the measures and doctrines of the Democracy, and at the same time indicated by acting and voting together an agreement upon all substantial questions that then were in issue and now excite the public mind.

It is indisputable that questions growing out of the institution of chattel slavery, will in the approaching Presidential canvass, as in past years, constitute the basis of disagreement between the political parties which are then to struggle for the ascendancy, and the success of either party, whatever its views upon other subjects, will be chiefly important as tending to show the sentiments of the American people upon these questions, and to establish a certain policy in regard to them as the policy of this government.

Thus, the Democratic party affirms that the institution of slavery, as it exists in the South is just, humane and beneficent; that free society is a modern experiment which has proved a failure; that manual labor is in itself attended with degradation, and those who practice it are and must be "the mud sills of society;" that slavery ought not only to be perpetuated, but extended; that though the men who framed the Federal Constitution were men of anti-slavery sentiments, yet that they did not understand the subject, and by a newly discovered construction of that instrument, it does in fact provide for the perpetuation and extension of the system, inasmuch, as by its own force, as they propose to interpret it, the institution of slavery is carried into every Territory, beyond the power of Congress or the people of such Territory. Moreover that it is the duty of Congress to extend its fostering care over the institution in the Territories, by enacting and enforcing there a "slave code," and as a natural corrollary that every restraint, so far as this government is concerned, ought to be removed from that odious and inhuman traffic, now pronounced piracy by the united voice of the civilized world, the African slave trade. This, we say, is what is insisted upon by the Democratic party, under whatever ambiguous phraseology, for present expediency, it may agree to express, or ignore these ideas, in the resolutions of its National Convention. While however, we state the foregoing propositions as among those which the Democratic party seeks to establish, as the basis of the policy of this government, we do not disguise the expectation, founded on past experience, that individuals of that party in certain localities of the Free States, partly from honest repugnance to the doctrines themselves, and partly from apprehension of the effects of their avowal, may be slow to believe

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and will be slower to admit them, and will probably deny that the success of the Democratic party will tend to their establishment. Neither do we seek to conceal the fact that, perhaps, a large proportion of those who adhere to the Democratic party in the Free States, seek to place themselves upon a sort of middle ground, called by those who advocate it "Popular Sovereignty," but by the controlling power of the party derisively termed "Squatter Sovereignty." This doctrine seems to be founded on the idea that the institution of slavery, is, in itself, neither good, nor evil; and that neither Congress, nor the citizens of the Free States, in the exercise of their political rights, owe any duty to civilization, humanity or the interests of free labor; but that, on the other hand, our vast domain should be appropriated to slavery at the option of the few settlers who may first rush into the Territory, no matter of what class, nor how sorely tempted to forget the future destiny of the region they inhabit, in the endeavor to supply wants growing out of a present scarcity of labor. The advocates of this doctrine have ever found it difficult to show how it is that Congress, which may make other "needful regulations" with respect to the Territories, is "*tabooed*" on this one subject; and why it is that "Popular Sovereignty" can exercise its powers only on this one question, but is impotent to choose its rulers, or to enact its laws, or to regulate any other of its "domestic institutions," except so far as Congress shall specially authorize it so to do. The "Popular Sovereignty," which this minority of the Democratic party presents to us is not the feast, to which, from its name, we might suppose ourselves invited, not the free and unfettered offspring of the right of man to self government, but a miserable paralytic, from whose nerveless and decrepid grasp, unsustained, would drop the sham sceptre at the first summons of tyranny. Recent history affords the most satisfactory evidence that this new use of an old phrase is the sheerest of delusions, for, how long would the Popular Sovereignty of Kansas have withstood the blandishments and bayonets of a "Democratic" administration, except for the firm determination of a portion of the inhabitants of the Free States that the virgin soil of that territory, so long by solemn betrothal dedicated to Freedom, should be snatched from the embrace of the ravisher at whatsoever cost? If this "Popular Sovereignty" doctrine is to be applied to the territories, let us, at least, have no more "Democratic" administrations, in whose embraces it may be smothered, or under whose heel it may be crushed.

Now, on the other hand, the Republican party proposes and advocates nothing more than simply a return to the early principles of the Government on this question of slavery—to the doctrines avowed by the fathers of the Republic, practiced with safety, and receiving a general acquiescence —doctrines which have been sanctioned by the most eminent statesmen, of all parties, and of all sections of the country.

While this party proposes no infringement upon, or invasion of, the rights of any State, they believe, nevertheless, in common with the great statesmen under whose auspices this Government was ushered into being, that slavery can exist only by the municipal laws of the sovereign which has jurisdiction over the locality. That while the Constitution neither spreads African Slavery over free territory, nor abolishes it in the States, yet, that it did intend to organise a free government, with a view to secure, so far as its powers reached, the "blessings of liberty." That while, with more or less regret, we recognize as a fact the existence of slavery in certain localities, authorised by the local governments under which it exists, and that the Constitution confers upon Congress or upon other states no power there to abolish it, we nevertheless deem it local and exceptional in its character, and Freedom the national institution sought to be established by the Constitution.

Now, it is idle to undertake, in the politics of this country, to ignore the slavery question, at the present day. The dominant party of the nation forces it upon our consideration, and stakes its existence upon compelling us to submit to its demands. The slave propagandists wield the executive, legislative, and judicial powers of the nation, and obtrude themselves upon us through all the acts of government. For the institution of slavery cannot be left to contend single handed with the system of free labor. The attempt to aggrandise and extend the one seems to require that every obstacle shall be interposed to check the growth and prosperity of the other.

The Homestead Bill must be defeated, because by offering farms on the public domain, large

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enough for the system of free labor cultivation, to the actual settler, upon the sole condition that he will contribute, by the fruits of his honest toil to the aggregate wealth of the country, an impulse may be given to free labor settlement, and that will bring in its train those dire foes of slavery, the meeting-house, the school-house, and the newspaper; attachment to republican institutions, individual independence, and diffusion of intelligence among the masses.

A beggarly appropriation to render more navigable the channel of communication between our great inland seas, on which floats the mighty commerce of the far west, must be vetoed, because it may not be useful for purposes of "public defense," while it is found quite constitutional to lavish millions upon the bars of the Savanah and other inconsiderable streams whose waters trickle along under the shadow of "the benign institution." A railroad to our Pacific shore is constitutional, *provided* it be located within certain lines of latitude. And so on through the chapter.

The Republican party above all seeks to maintain our republican system of government, and to uphold all the provisions of the Constitution. But while those who rule the Democratic party, with an ingenuity and for a purpose parallel to that of the fleeing felon who raises the cry of "stop thief," charge the Republicans with a design to infract the Constitution, they, at the same time with brazen effrontery proclaim that they will not be bound by the majority principle of the government, and, unless the result suits their views, they will resist with armed force that provision of the Constitution which declares "that the person having the greatest number of votes for President *shall be President*, if such number be a majority of the whole number of electors appointed."

In furtherance of the schemes of the Democratic party, there has been inaugurated throughout the slave States, where that party has control, a reign of terror which aims to stifle not only the public declarations, but the private conscience of mankind. Liberty of speech, liberty of the press, and even liberty of opinion no longer exist there. The political history of mankind does not warrant us in believing that the demands of oppression and tyranny will ever be abated or tempered by acquiescence and submission, and we deem it the part of wisdom, prudence, and conservatism, to resist them by the peaceful means provided by the Constitution. By the defeat of the Democratic party alone, can be arrested the progress of those doctrines which seem so plainly tending to the destruction of civil liberty. The men of the Revolution said in their great declaration, which we are not yet prepared to admit, is "a mere string of glittering generalities," that when a long "train of abuses and usurpations pursuing invariably the same object evince a design to reduce them under absolute subjection, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government."

Happily we, in order to throw off the government of the Democratic party are required to face no such dangers as were encountered by the authors of that declaration; the peaceful remedy of the ballot, if now adopted, will suffice for the exigency.

We believe that those citizens who, though formerly of different political organizations, acted together on the occasion we have alluded to, did so from elevated motives, and because they discerned in the measure which gave rise to the preliminary movements for uniting its opponents, one of the measures of despotism, not accidental, nor growing out of temporary circumstances, but necessarily developed in the progress of the Democratic party, and in pursuance of its clearly indicated policy.

We therefore conclude, that the large majority of the electors of this county still desire, by some practical means, to resist the policy of the Democratic party, and especially so to use their suffrages as to deprive it of the immense power for evil which the control of the general government affords. We are then brought to the question as to the best practical method of accomplishing the desired result. Under our system of government, as it is carried out in practice, political results of importance can be attained only through political organizations. The Whig party, as such, has long since ceased to exist. It will be, probably, conceded that the American party is powerless for the purpose of electing its candidates, or establishing its distinctive principles. No past experience can warrant us in the belief that a new party can be organized with a prospect of success at the approaching National Election. However conservative may be the principles of a party, if its destinctive political action has only the effect to secure or render

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more probable the success of a distructive party, then, we submit that whatever may be its principles, its action is not conservative. We therefore suggest for your candid and unprejudiced consideration that the triumph of the Democratic party, bringing in its train renewed and greater agitation, oppression, usurpation, and general profligacy of administration, can only be prevented through the agency and organization of the Republican party; that the attempt to reinaugurate the policy which distinguished the administrations of Washington, Jefferson, and many of their illustrious successors is not an attempt which deserves reproach or condemnation; that the Republican party is now the true conservative party, which aims to preserve the Union and the Constitution, and restore vitality and health to our Republican Institutions. A party is sectional, in the obnoxious sense of that term, only when it seeks to make the supposed interests of one section of the country paramount to the just rights of another; and in the true sense of that term the Democratic party is, and for five years has been, peculiarly sectional. It has been during all that time, controlled by a few hundred thousand slaves owners, living in one "section" of the Union, and by patronage, treaties and laws, and especially by executive power endeavoring to perpetuate and extend the institution of slavery, with its attendant train of moral, political and social evils.

So far is the Republican party from being subject to the charges of sectionalism, that thousands of the most intelligent slave-holders in the Southern States, the admirers and followers of Henry Clay, in short all who believed with him that slavery was full of evil to the white race, and should not be extended, in spite of the reign of terror of the Democracy in that section of the Union, heartily sympathize with the Republican party, and will manifest it by sending delegates to the Chicago Convention.

The principles to which you will lend your support by adhesion to the Republican party, are set forth in the call of its National Committee, convoking its National Convention at Chicago to the broad and liberal character of which we particularly invite your attention. All are invited to enter the Republican organization, and participate by representation in that convention, who are willing to sustain the principles set forth in its call, and who are willing to co-operate in support of its nominees.

The organization of the Central Republican Club of this county is upon an equally liberal basis. It embraces each elector of the county who may see fit to join it, and requires nothing except that he adheres to the principles upon which the call for the Chicago Convention is based, and intends to support its nominees.—The principal objects of this and its affiliated and auxiliary clubs will be a more perfect organization; the more ready dissemination of documents and other political information; the securing of a more perfect canvass in each locality than has hitherto been attained; the arrangement of meetings, and the registration of legal voters.

Believing this system to be highly useful for these important purposes, we invite you to form similar clubs in each town and ward; and we desire, as we are expected to do by the meeting which devolved this duty on us, to embrace in this invitation all who are willing to co-operate in securing the defeat of the Democratic party of the nation, and the triumph of principles indicated in the call for the Chicago Convention, invoking all such to lay aside all past differences and personal prejudices growing out of former political association—knowing as all of you do full well, that the Republican party is the only power, the only organization, that can resist successfully the despotism of the Democratic party.

Dated Buffalo, Feb. 20, 1860.

ALEX. W. HARVEY, President.
JOHN GREINER, } Vice Prests.
MICHAEL MESMER, }
FAYETTE RUMSEY, Rec. Sec'y.
JAMES D. WARREN, Cor. Sec'y.
ISAAC HOLLOWAY, Treasurer.
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